

# KUTV: Oil Shale Development, Utah Gets 8 Per

## Top News

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## Oil Shale Development, Utah Gets 8 Permits

As early as next February, companies in Colorado, Utah and Wyoming could begin testing new techniques for coaxing oil out of shale on federal land.

The Bureau of Land Management this month received 19 applications from companies that want to try research and development projects in the rich deposits of oil-saturated rock under federal land in the Green River Basin.

Ten applications were submitted for Colorado, eight for Utah and one for Wyoming.

The agency opened up the application process this spring, reviving an a program that had been essentially dormant since oil shale went bust in the 1980s.

A team of officials from the BLM, the federal energy and defense departments and representatives of the three states' governors will begin evaluating the applications in October. They could grant one or more leases in each state by February.

BLM spokeswoman Heather Feeney said the team is looking for companies that will try new technologies and can develop oil shale economically and in an environmentally friendly way. Each 10-year lease would be for a 160-acre parcel.

The equivalent of about 2 trillion barrels of oil is buried in U.S. oil shale deposits primarily on federal land in the three states.

Many people are skeptical that oil shale could be an economical source of oil. But high oil prices and turmoil in many oil-producing countries have prompted Congress to try again.

Oil shale last boomed in the late 1970s before going bust in 1982 when Exxon shut down its

western Colorado project because of costs. Some companies, though, have continued to look at shale technology, hoping higher oil prices would make the industry viable.

The energy act approved this summer requires the government to be ready to issue commercial leases by 2007.

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